

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02392 01 OF 02 190703Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IO-13 IGA-02 /031 W
-----190738Z 079620 /11

R 181526Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4072

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2392

NEA/ARN FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID LE
SUBJ: PROSTHETIC ASSISTANCE

REF: (A) BEIRUT 0855, (B) BEIRUT 1519, (C) BEIRUT 2100,
(D) STATE 105753

1. ON MAY 12 EMBOFF, ACCOMPANIED BY DR. NICOLE GRASSET OF ICRC AND MICHEL STHIOUL, A SWISS MASTER PROSTHETIC TECHNICIAN FROM BASLE, TOURED AL KAFAT REHABILITATION CENTER, LOCATED NEAR SHIYAH IN SOUTHEASTERN SUBURBS OF BEIRUT. HEAD OF CENTER, NADEEM SHAWYRI, OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. AL KAFAT IS PRIVATE "PHILANTHROPIC" INSTITUTION WHICH OFFERS CLASSES FOR DEAF, HANDICAPPED, AND MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN. THE GOL'S OFFICE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF THESE STUDENTS. A CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS ORDER SUPPLIES ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF TEACHERS, BUT THE SCHOOL IS OPEN TO ALL RELIGIONS.

B. AL KAFAT ALSO MAKES AND FITS PROSTHETIC DEVICES AND BRACES FOR POLIO VICTIMS. THERE ARE NOW FOUR FULL-TIME TECHNICIANS AT CENTER, WHO MAKE AND FIT BOTH BRACES AND PROSTHETIC DEVICES. CENTER HAS CAPACITY TO MAKE, FIT AND ADJUST 35 PROSTHETIC DEVICES PER MONTH.

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C. CENTER CLOSED IN MARCH 1976 AND DID NOT REOPEN UNTIL DECEMBER 1976. DURING LAST FULL YEAR OF NORMAL OPERATIONS -- 1974 -- AL KAFAT MADE, FITTED AND ADJUSTED ABOUT 350 DEVICES OF WHICH ABOUT 35 PERCENT WERE PROSTHETIC DEVICES. IN 1975, OPERATING AT LESS THAN FULL CAPACITY, CENTER FITTED AND PREPARED

PROSTHETIC DEVICES FOR ABOUT 45 PEOPLE.

D. IN 1973 AL KAFaat TRAINED NINE PEOPLE TO BE PROSTHETIC TECHNICIANS: TWO SUDANESE, TWO PALESTINIANS, TWO SYRIANS, ONE JORDANIAN, AND TWO LEBANESE. LATER THAT YEAR, CENTER TRAINED ONE ADDITIONAL LEBANESE. OF THE THREE LEBANESE, ONE STILL WORKED AT CENTER, ONE HAD UNRELATED JOB AT MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, AND ONE HAD NOT INDICATED WHAT HE WAS NOW DOING.

E. AL KAFaat RECENTLY PROPOSED TO WORLD REHABILITATION FUND (WRF) THAT IT CONTRIBUTE \$200,000 TO EQUIP AND STAFF PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT AT CENTER. IN RETURN, AL KAFaat WOULD GIVE FREE EIGHT-MONTH COURSE TO TRAIN EIGHT LEBANESE PROSTHETIC TECHNICIANS. TEACHERS WOULD BE FOUR TECHNICIANS ALREADY EMPLOYED BY CENTER, WHO WOULD TEACH AND CONTINUE TO PREPARE AND FIT DEVICES AT SAME TIME. WRF, HOWEVER, RESPONDED BY TELEGRAM WHICH SAID IN STRONG LANGUAGE THAT PROPOSAL WAS UNACCEPTABLE.

2. REMARKS OF STIOUHL. AFTER TOUR OF AL KAFaat FACILITIES, STIOUHL, WHO IS ALSO FAMILIAR WITH

FACILITIES AT AUB, BAYT SHEBAB AND TRIPOLI, MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO DR. GRASSET AND EMBOFF:

A. AL KAFaat PROBABLY DID NOT HAVE CAPACITY
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TO MAKE, FIT AND ADJUST 35 PROSTHETIC DEVICES PER MONTH AS ALLEGED BY SHAWYRI. INSTEAD, CAPACITY WAS PROBABLY ABOUT SIXTEEN PER MONTH.

B. EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL AT AL KAFaat WERE INFERIOR TO THAT OF AUB. QUALITY OF AL KAFaat TECHNICIANS WAS MEDIOCRE. ONLY ONE WAS FULLY QUALIFIED TO MAKE PROSTHETIC DEVICES, ALTHOUGH THE OTHERS COULD HELP HIM. AL KAFaat WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE HIGH QUALITY COURSE FOR PROSTHETIC TECHNICIANS, WHEREAS AUB WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO.

C. "ABSOLUTE PRIORITY" SHOULD BE GIVEN TO HELPING AUB REOPEN PROSTHETICS DEPARTMENT AS COMPLEMENT TO CENTERS AT BAYT SHEBAB AND TRIPOLI.

D. WITH REGARD TO BAYT SHEBAB, FIRST OF FIVE SWISS TECHNICIANS -- TWO PROSTHETISTS, TWO PHYSIOTHERAPISTS AND ONE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST --

WOULD ARRIVE BEGINNING OF JUNE. ALL FIVE WOULD SERVE
FOR ONE YEAR AT BAYT SHEBAB.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IO-13 IGA-02 /031 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4073

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 2392

3. EMBASSY COMMENTS.

A. RE REF D QUERIES, NEITHER EMBASSY, ICRC NOR
AUH HAS KNOWLEDGE OF ANY PROGRAM -- FUNDED BY WRF OR
ANY OTHER SOURCE -- WHICH HAS RESULTED IN FITTING
APPROXIMATELY 350 AMPUTEES IN ADDITION TO APPROXIMATELY
350 AMPUTEES FITTED BY DUTCH TEAM. ONLY MAJOR
PROSTHETIC ACTIVITIES TO OUR KNOWLEDGE HAVE BEEN AT AUH,
RED CRESCENT HOSPITAL, BAYT SHEBAB AND TRIPOLI AS
REPORTED REFS A AND B.

B. WE DO NOT BELIEVE AL KAFAT TECHNICIANS
SHOULD BE USED AS PART OF UNITED STATES PROGRAM AND
STRONGLY RECOMMEND AGAINST GIVING U.S. FUNDS TO AL
KAFAT CENTER FOR PROSTHETICS UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.
SHWAYRI'S ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS WERE OFTEN EVASIVE.
AS SUGGESTED BY MR. STIOUHL, SHWAYRI APPEARED TO
EXAGGERATE CONSIDERABLY THE CAPACITY OF HIS CENTER.
ON PREVIOUS OCCASION HE HAD TOLD OTHER PEOPLE THAT HE
WAS "WRF REPRESENTATIVE IN LEBANON." THIS TIME, HOWEVER,
HE LEFT NO DOUBT WRF WAS NOT PREPARED TO FUND AL
KAFAT PROSTHETICS PROGRAM. (FYI: TO EMBASSY AND
ICRC KNOWLEDGE, EUGENE TAYLOR HAS YET TO VISIT
LEBANON AS SCHEDULED.)

C. WE REPEAT OUR RECOMMENDATION -- IN WHICH
DR. GRASSET, MR. STIOUHL AND DR. ASPER FULLY AND
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EXPLICITLY CONCUR -- THAT UNITED STATES WOULD BEST SERVE LEBANON BY FINANCING FOR 18 TO 24 MONTHS TWO PROSTHETISTS, TWO PHYSIOTHERAPISTS, AND ONE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST FOR AUH. THESE PEOPLE COULD NOT ONLY MEET LONG AND SHORT TERM NEEDS, BUT ALSO HELP TRAIN LEBANESE TECHNICIANS TO CARRY ON AFTERWARDS. GRASSET AND STIOUHL HOLD THAT AUB HAS BOTH THE SPACE AND EQUIPMENT TO GIVE BOTH SERVICE AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING. (AUB HAS ON HAND \$200,000 WORTH OF EQUIPMENT PLUS SUFFICIENT MATERIAL TO MAKE PROSTHETIC DEVICES FOR 100 AMPUTEES.) IN DR. ASPER'S VIEW, IF FIVE TECHNICIANS MENTIONED ABOVE WERE TO STAY TWO YEARS, THEY COULD GIVE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING TO THREE LEBANESE IN PROSTHETIC TECHNIQUES, FOUR LEBANESE IN PHYSIOTHERAPY TECHNIQUES, AND TWO LEBANESE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TECHNIQUES.

D. IF AUB CONDUCTS FULL SERVICE AND TRAINING PROGRAM, ADDITIONAL PROSTHETIC MATERIAL AND FUNDS FOR SUPPORT OF TRAINEES WOULD BE REQUIRED, ACCORDING TO DR. ASPER. AUB ESTIMATES IN VERY ROUGH TERMS PROGRAM AS OUTLINED ABOVE FOR TWO YEARS WOULD COST \$160,000 PER YEAR FOR TOTAL OF \$320,000, BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

(1) SALARIES AND TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR FIVE TECHNICIANS: \$200,000 (\$100,000 PER YEAR);

(2) STIPENDS FOR EIGHT TRAINEES: \$40,000 (\$20,000 PER YEAR);

(3) PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL PROSTHETIC MATERIAL FOR 100 AMPUTEES AT AN AVERAGE OF \$800 PER AMPUTEE: \$80,000 (\$40,000 PER YEAR).

E. IF AUSTRALIANS AT AUH WERE TO EXTEND, THIS WOULD REDUCE SOMEWHAT ABOVE REQUIREMENTS. AUSTRALIANS CONSIST OF TWO PHYSIOTHERAPISTS AND ONE OCCUPATIONAL
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THERAPIST WHOSE TOURS OF DUTY WILL END JULY 30. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, REQUESTED A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION AND ARE EXPECTING A REPLY FROM HOME WITHIN ONE MONTH. IF THE AUSTRALIANS ARE ALLOWED TO STAY, THERE WOULD BE NO NEED DURING THIS SIX-MONTH PERIOD FOR THE TWO PHYSIOTHERAPISTS AND ONE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST CITED PARA 3-C. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD BE NEEDED TO REPLACE THE AUSTRALIANS AFTER LATTER LEFT.

4. NOTE: SHWAYRI HAS APPARENTLY OBTAINED COPY OF
REF C, WHICH HE READ TO DR. GRASSET. WHILE
INFORMATION IN OUR TELEGRAMS ON PROSTHETICS IS NOT
CLASSIFIED IN STRICT SENSE, WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE
USED WITH SOME DISCRETION SO AS NOT TO EMBARRASS PEOPLE
HERE WHO HAVE BEEN OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO US.
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